AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A device for passing a flexible elongated element through a portion of a subject, said device comprising:

structure for retaining ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element; and

advancement means for longitudinally advancing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from a proximal end of said device toward a distal end of said device with sufficient force to pass ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element through the portion of the subject;

wherein said advancement means include at least one drive wheel for contacting ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element, and further wherein said at least one drive wheel contains a peripheral groove therein for receiving ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element so as to provide increased contact area between ~~said~~ the at least one drive wheel and ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A device according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the peripheral groove of ~~said~~ the at least one drive wheel is ~~configured in a~~ generally v-shaped ~~groove~~.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A device according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the peripheral groove is ~~configured in an~~ generally arc-shaped ~~groove~~.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A device according to claim 3 wherein ~~said~~ the arc-shaped groove is a portion of a hypothetical circle having a diameter slightly greater than a diameter of ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A device according to claim 1 further comprising a follower wheel ~~corresponding to said~~ for cooperative operation with the at least one drive wheel.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A device according to claim 5 wherein said follower wheel contains a peripheral groove therein corresponding to ~~said~~ the peripheral groove of ~~said~~ the at least one drive wheel.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A device according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one drive wheel contains an additional peripheral groove~~s~~ of ~~differing~~ a different size~~s~~ so as to accommodate differing sizes of ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A device according to claim ~~5~~ 6 wherein said follower wheel contains an additional peripheral groove~~s~~ of ~~differing~~ of a different size~~s~~ so as to accommodate differing sizes of ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A device according to claim 5 wherein each of said follower wheel and ~~said~~ the at least one drive wheel are power driven.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A device for passing a flexible elongated element through a portion of a subject, said device comprising:

structure for retaining ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element; and

advancement means for longitudinally advancing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from a proximal end of said device

toward a distal end of said device with sufficient force to pass ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element through the portion of the subject;

wherein said advancement means include opposed roller-driven belts.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A device according to claim 10 wherein ~~said~~ the opposed roller-driven belts are positioned adjacent to ~~said~~ the distal end of said device so as to pull ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element through said device rather than pushing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated device therethrough.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A device according to claim 10 wherein at least one of ~~said~~ the opposed roller-driven belts contains a groove therein for receiving ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element so as to provide increased contact area between ~~said~~ the at least one of ~~said~~ the opposed roller-driven belts and ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A device according to claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the groove of ~~said~~ the at least one of ~~said~~ the opposed roller-driven belts is ~~configured in a~~ v-shaped ~~groove~~.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A device according to claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the groove is ~~configured in an~~ arc-shaped ~~groove~~.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A device according to claim 14 wherein ~~said~~ the arc-shaped groove is a portion of a hypothetical circle having a diameter slightly greater than a diameter of ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A device according to claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one of ~~said~~ the opposed roller-driven belts contains an additional groove~~s~~ of ~~differing~~ a different size~~s~~ so as to accommodate differing sizes of ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A device according to claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one of ~~said~~ the opposed roller-driven belts is provided with a flat wire-engaging surface.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A device for passing a flexible elongated element through a portion of a subject, said device comprising:

structure for retaining ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element; and

advancement means for longitudinally advancing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from a proximal end of said device toward a distal end of said device with sufficient force to pass ~~said~~ the flexible element through the portion of the subject;

wherein said advancement means include at least one roller-driven belt attachment means for attaching ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element to ~~said~~ at least one roller-driven belt, and

separation means for separating ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from ~~said~~ the at least one roller-driven belt.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A device according to claim 18 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one roller-driven belt of said advancement means comprises opposed roller-driven belts.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A device according to claim 18 wherein ~~said~~ the attachment means comprises an adhesive.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A device according to claim 18 wherein said separation means comprises a blade for stripping

~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from ~~said~~ the at least one roller-driven belt.

Claim 22 (currently amended): A device according to claim 21 wherein said blade is positioned at ~~said~~ the distal end of said device, adjacent to ~~said~~ the at least one roller-driven belt.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A device according to claim 18 further comprising a pair of lengthwise ~~expanding~~ extending ribs extending along ~~the~~ an outer surface of the at least one ~~of said~~ roller-driven belt so as to guide ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element along a center portion of ~~said~~ the at least one roller driven belt.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A device according to claim 18 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one roller driven belt ~~consists of~~ comprises a carrier wire for ~~attachment to said~~ advancing the flexible elongated element.

Claim 25 (currently amended): A device for passing a flexible elongated element through a portion of a subject, said device comprising:

structure for retaining ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element; and

advancement means for longitudinally advancing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from a proximal end of said device toward a distal end of said device with sufficient force to pass ~~said~~ the flexible element through the portion of the subject;

wherein said advancement means include a roller-driven tube, ~~said~~ the roller-driven tube being provided with a lengthwise endless slit and being of a size to house ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element, and said advancement means further ~~comprising~~ comprises separation means for separating ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from ~~said~~ the roller-driven tube through ~~said~~ the slit.

Claim 26 (currently amended): A device according to claim 25 wherein said separation means comprise a blade for separating ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from ~~said~~ the roller-driven tube through ~~said~~ the slit.

Claim 27 (currently amended): A device according to claim 26 wherein said blade is positioned at ~~said~~ the distal end of said device adjacent to ~~said~~ the roller-driven tube.

Claim 28 (currently amended): A device for passing a flexible elongated element through a portion of a subject, said device comprising:

structure for retaining ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element;

advancement means for longitudinally advancing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from a proximal end of said device toward a distal end of said device with sufficient force to pass ~~said~~ the flexible element through the portion of the subject;

wherein said advancement means comprise a roller-driven strap configurable to pass around ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element so as to longitudinally advance ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element toward ~~said~~ the distal end of said device, and rotate ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element, as said roller-driven strap passes through a set of rollers.

Claim 29 (currently amended): A device for passing a flexible elongated element through a portion of a subject, said device comprising:

structure for retaining ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element; and

advancement means for longitudinally advancing ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from a proximal end of said device toward a distal end of said device with sufficient force to pass ~~said~~ the flexible element through the portion of the subject;

wherein said advancement means comprise a driver means ~~configurable~~ adapted to ~~carry said~~ move the flexible elongated element toward said distal end of said device.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A device according to claim ~~28~~ 29 wherein said driver means comprise~~s~~ a rotatable rod having a spiral groove therein, ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element being positionable within ~~said~~ the spiral groove, and a stationary rigid sleeve ~~being~~ disposed around said driver means to cover ~~said~~ the spiral groove and confine ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element so as to move ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element toward ~~said~~ the distal end of said device as ~~said~~ the driver means is rotated within said stationary rigid sleeve.

Claim 31 (currently amended): A device according to claim ~~28~~ 29 wherein said driver means comprises a rotatable rod ~~being~~ covered with an elastomeric tube, ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element being spirally positionable on said elastomeric tube, and

a sleeve being disposed around said driver means to cover ~~said~~ the spirally positioned flexible elongated element as to move ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element toward ~~said~~ the distal end of said device as said driver means is rotated within said sleeve.

Claim 32 (currently amended): A device according to claim ~~29~~ 30 further comprising an ~~inlet~~ outlet for receiving ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element from ~~said~~ the spiral groove, and a guide tube ~~being~~ positioned adjacent to said outlet so as to direct and support ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element discharged from ~~said~~ the spiral groove.

Claim 33 (currently amended): A device according to claim ~~31~~ 29 wherein said driver means is positioned adjacent to ~~said~~ the distal end of said device.

Claim 34 (currently amended): A device according to claim ~~29~~ 30 wherein a pre-determined quantity of ~~said~~ the flexible elongated element is spirally configurable in ~~said~~ the spiral groove of said driver means so as to dispense only ~~said~~ the pre-determined quantity.